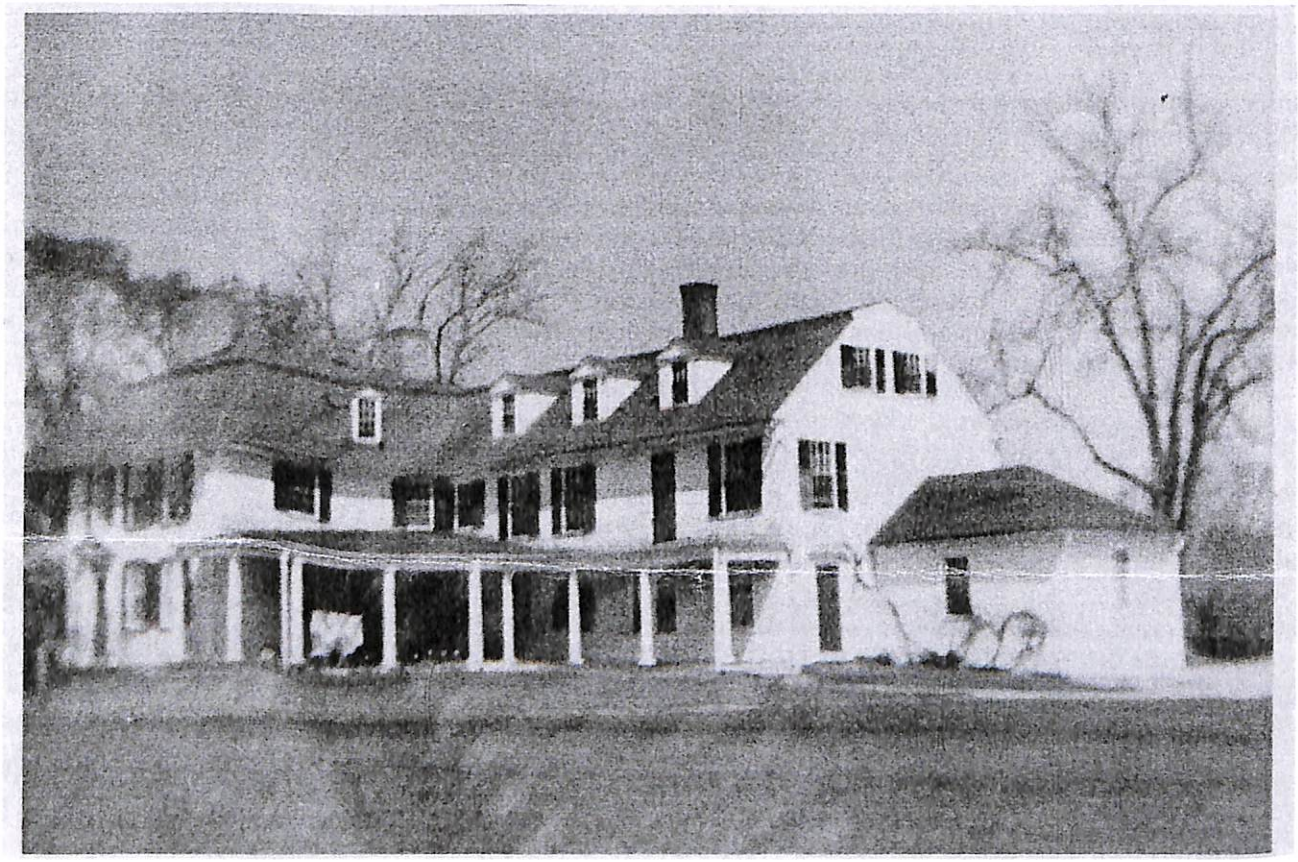
TAFT TALK

No. 77 *Newsletter of the Taft Family Association* **Dec 2019**



The Taft Homestead, So. Main St., Uxbridge, MA

Roy Henry has sent us this lovely photograph taken by his father in Jun 1966. He goes on to say that "he and his father were working on the estate for Mr. William A. L. Bazeley who bought the Taft farm sometime between 1912 and 1915. He came from Wales and settled in Uxbridge.

"The day the photo was taken was the day that Mr. Bazeley died. My father was mowing lawns, and I was doing some painting, the maid came to my father, and said that Mr. Bazeley wanted to talk to him, and he was the last to see him. He died shortly after that, aged 95."

Mr. William A. L. Bazeley served as a MA State Representative in 1909 and 1912 and as a State Senator for four years from 1913 to 1916. He then became Commissioner of the Dept. of Conservation and State Forester after 1919.

From the Board of the Taft Family Association

The board of directors of the Taft Family Association has been grappling with the future of the Association for over a year now. A few minor changes have been put in place to ensure that we can continue without jeopardy. Having said that, however, it has become painfully obvious to us that there are only three of us on the board and, obviously, we are not getting younger. Charlie Davis, Sally Gagne and I are well into our 70s (or in Charlie's case in his 90s), so we realize that we can not continue this way much longer.

We have had quite a number of email conversations (the time is long gone when the board members tended to live within an hour's drive of each other, and sometimes within waving distance). We have decided that unless new people come forward now, we will be obliged to disband the association by the end of 2020. Most of you have been loyal members for many years and this has been a painful decision for us to make on your behalf.

Your editor has been amassing the pertinent records of the family on databases. We are currently wrestling with how to maintain or, at least, preserve those records and make them accessible. In addition we would like to be able to continue research on the family and add that to the current information. To that end we have been studying the possibilities of creating a gedcom file on either ancestry.com or through NEHGS as well as our own website.

We could create gedcom files which will suit these purposes to a degree and these would be easily accessible to Taft family members, as well as the public. They have safeguards to ensure that no living people are readable to the public unless desired. This approach would require extensive hours to enter, edit and, in the future, add information. We do have money in our coffers that could be used to hire folks to help us with that effort.

We could create our own website, again the moneys we have could be used for this purpose. This website could include the gedcom files but also include other databases that we have amassed. Unfortunately this approach requires not only the considerable hours to input and edit but also on-going efforts in order to keep the website current and relevant for years to come.

We have had one member express interest in helping us to work on these issues. Are there others who would be interested in taking over the Taft Family Association and / or in helping the board resolve the issues? Do you have strong feelings about the proposals? Do you have other suggestions? Email your editor at patmarkallen@gmail.com

Small World Once Again

Gene Seelye read the "In Memoriam" for Joseph Laurence Champaign (TTT 76 p 6) and realized that he lives about 3 blocks from the Green home in Wellsboro, PA where Joseph's mother, Neva King, died in 1996.

The grandfather of Neva King was Prince William King Jr who was the son of Prince William King Sr. Gene Seelye also descends from the original Prince William King as follows: 1. Prince William King, Sr;; 2 James King; 3. Sarah Jane "Sallie" (King) Lattimer; 4. Sarah Jane (Lattimer) Taft; 5. Rose Ella (Taft) Seelye; 6. Eugene Arch Seeley!!!

Joseph Laurence "Larry" Champaign was the son of Neva (King) Champaign (Ural Oscar King, Prince William King Jr and Polly Ann Bancroft, Asa Bancroft and Anna Taft, Jesse (Mijamin, Nathan, Mijamin, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

Sarah Jane Lattimer married Archibald "Arch Taft (Charles H., Laban, Jesse, Mijamin, Nathan, Mijamin, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

The impact of religious belief on Tafts

In the last issue of Taft Tree Talk (No 76 Jun 2019 p 7) we gave a brief biography of Rev. Austin Taft. He was born 26 May 1806 in Worcester, MA, son of John / Jonathan and Abigail (Nelson) Taft, and died 12 Jan 1888 in Bowling Green, Wood, OH. He was buried in Oak Grove Cemetery, Bowling Green, OH (FAG). He married (1) 9 Feb 1831 in Steuben Co., NY "Sally" Benedict. Sally Benedict was born about 1808 in NY, daughter of Andrew Benedict, and died 27 Jul 1850 in Ripley, Huron, OH. She was buried in the Barre Farm Cemetery, Greenwich, OH (FAG). They had the following children: Helen Dorlisca, Andrew B., Ferdinando Cortes / Curtis, Austin S. P., and Rothilda L. Taft. Rev. Austin Taft married (2) 26 Dec 1850 in Huron, OH Catherine Rigsdon Stratton. Catherine Rigsdon Stratton was born 25 May 1819 in Beaver Co., PA, daughter of Daniel and Rachel (Logan) Stratton, and died 12 Jan 1909 in Toledo, OH. She was buried in Oak Grove Cemetery, Bowling Green, OH (FAG). They had the following children: Emma and Melville Dubois "Mel" Taft.

Austin Taft stated that he was born in MA and removed to VT with his parents when he was a young child. The family then moved to Steuben, NY when he was aged 15. He moved to Huron, OH where he was introduced to the Methodist Society. His parents had been strong Presbyterians and called the Methodists witches –"full of wild fire and very dangerous to hear them preach." However on an evening in Feb 1838 he became overwhelmed and converted to that faith, recognizing that he needed to preach the gospel. His parents also converted.

Austin Taft was the son of John / Jonathan, John, Matthew) Taft.

Thanks as always to Charles A. "Chuck" Westin for his sharing of the following information.

A more fulsome description of the conversion of Rev. Austin Taft and the impact his religion had on his life continues, both from his obituary written by Rev. A.B. Leonard, and his own personal memoirs, which continue on p. 4.

"A Good Worker Gone

Rev. Austin Taft died at his home in Bowling Green, OH, 12 Jan. having passed his 81st year.

"Many prominent Prohibitionists will remember him for, at his home they were always welcome. He was for a number of years connected with the Prohibition movement and an earnest supporter of the Prohibition party - a man of deep conviction and strong courage. He was the first man to vote for the abolition of slavery in the township in which he lived, and almost the only man in his town a few years ago who voted the Prohibition ticket. He did not wait for a movement of such importance and magnitude as the overthrow of the liquour traffic through the dominance of a political party to become popular, before he gave it his support. But recognizing the righeousness of the cause, and the moral quality of a vote, along party lines today, he stood manfully for the grandest organization God ever put into existence for the overthrow of organized and legalized iniquity, and the perpetuity of righteous government, paying little attention to the contemptuous remarks of men who possessed less courage and a great deal less piety. He worked all day at the polls on the 8th of November. Soon after he answered the summons to join the ranks of the redeemed. The ultimate triumph of our cause, he doubted not for a moment. He hoped to live here to see the glad day, but now he is translated, yet before his translation he bore testimony to his faith in the coming triumph - in these words: 'I expect to shout in glory when the inhabitants of earth are delivered, by the destruction of the red dragon rum.' In his death the party loses an earnest supporter, the Prohibition Club of Bowling Green a leader and safe counselor. Nevertheless willing hands will grasp the sword which is left us and will carry the cause for which he labored, for which he prayed, for which he voted, on to victory. "With the word of God our token,/We'll keep our courage still unbroken,/For behold the Lord hath spoken,/And the glad day comes."

Rev. Austin Taft's Memoirs of His Conversion

The original manuscript, in Rev. Austin Taft's handwriting and including his signature, was found among the papers of his son Mel Taft of Toledo, OH. His sister Emma read it and she and Bertha Park, granddaughter of Rev. Austin Taft, brought it to the greater family's knowledge, believing they would benefit greatly from reading their ancestor's own words, in his own time.

A Short sketch of the life and conversion and call to ministry of Austin Taft dated 10 May 1887 (written about 8 months before his death)

"We left Vermont when I was fifteen years old. I never saw but one Methodist in that State. We settled in the state of NY - Steuben Co. where I lived until I was married on the 9 Feb 1831. Here I became acquainted with the people called Methodists. But I was taught they were from witches - full of wild fire and was very dangerous to hear them preach. In 1833 we moved to Huron Co, OH. Here we found a Methodist Society that held their meetings in a log school house near our house.

"We frequently went to hear them preach and was convinced they enjoyed something that we knew nothing of. Subsequently a two days prayer meeting was appointed in the neighborhood conducted by H. G. Dubois. We attended this meeting but became offended at the loud and noisy demonstrations witnessed there and left with disgust. The meeting continued and we were urged to come back by a good Sister and attend the meeting; for the Lord was reviving his Work. I told my wife it was none of their business whether we attended meeting or not - But if she desired to go I would harness the team and we would go.

"We went and found a number of the leading men of the Town at the Altar of Prayer pleading for mercy. I was invited to go and went and Resolved that I would seek God until I found Him -With Crys and tears I pled for mercy. My feelings were so intense that I dispaired, even of life but concluded I would spend life's last hour in pleading for mercy, with little or no expectation of finding it. Eternity with all its dread realities opened up before me and it's impossible for any pen to describe the awful agonies of my mind. It is beyond all human description. It seemed to me I had already entered the dark abodes of Eternal night, and right here something seemed to whisper to me - that there was mercy for me - I stopped and listened for a moment. What a word - mercy for me. It was the best news I ever heard. From that moment my faith laid hold upon the Savior's promises with an unguiding grasp and I saw a light in the distance far above my head, and grew brighter as it came near, and when it reached me I fell to the floor as quick as the lightning flash, and that moment was filled with the fullness of God. Old things passed away and all things became new. My happiness was complete. This was on the evening of February 1838. And I remained motionless for forty-five minutes without power to move a muscle. My good Presbyterian Father thought I was dead and talked of sending for the Doctor.

"The people were engaged in singing, shouting, and praising God - and it was the best music I ever heard. I arose singing 'O How Happy Are They, Who their savior Obeyed.' From that time to this I have never opposed the Methodists for making a little noise. I soon felt it my duty to join the Methodist Church; told my good mother one day at her house what my intention was. She told me not to do it; that it would be my ruin.

"On my way home while passing through a piece of woods my heart was strangely drawn out in prayer. I fell upon my knees and asked God to send staying power upon my mother. That moment the power of God came upon me like a mighty rushing wind and I know my prayer was answered. My sister came to our house that afternoon and said soon after I left their house while mother was setting the table for dinner She suddenly fell to the floor and shouted aloud the praises of God and thanked God that she had the same religion that Austin had. Father and Mother soon joined the M.E. Church and have long since joined the Church on high.

"I felt from the time of my conversion that it was my duty to preach the Gospel of the Son of God. I told the Lord I had no education, had no gifts, and it was impossible for me to preach and asked to be excused. But I had no rest while I refused to do my duty. At last I told the Lord if He would give an evidence that I could not doubt I would try. I went into the dense forest about one half mile and laid the case before God in prayer. And all at once the Savior appeared before me. There seemed to be a Halo of Glory around about his person and his person appeared as bright as the lightning. This appearance was manifested twice and vanished out of sight but left inscribed upon the Heavens in great bright golden capitals – 'The Promise - Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. O!' How many hundreds times have I realized the fulfillment of this blessed promise by feeling his presence with me when trying to speak for Him and this is the best witness that we can have. Now may the Blessing of God rest on every one that looks upon these lines. Amen, Austin Taft."

Army Nurse from Oxford tended wounded in Normandy

Dorothy (Taft) Barre, currently aged 106 (!), was honored for her work during WW II during the Battle of the Bulge, with a wonderful article in the Worcester Telegram of Feb 2019.

She said she had joined the Army in 1943 because her work "as a private duty nurse was 'too depressing.'"

Dorothy Barre lives independently in the Overlook Life Care Community in Charlton but hails from Oxford. She graduated from Oxford High School in 1936 and attended Simmons College in Boston for one year before going to MA Memorial Hospital in Boston for her nurse's training.

Dorothy May Taft was born 17 Jul 1918 in Oxford, MA, daughter of Walter Stockwell and Fronie Isabelle (Adams) Taft. She married (1) before 1952 – Dunham and had one son Nelson Frederick Dunham. She married (2) 24 Sep 1960 Clarence Joseph Barre who died in 1999.

Walter Stockwell was the son of John Allen (Allen, Elkanah, Nathaniel, Thomas, Thomas, Thomas, Robert) Taft.

Dorothy Barre's reminiscences about her life continue as follows

"At that point, everybody was joining. I came home and all the people in my class in Oxford were gone. The boys were in the service or gone to college and the girls were the same or married. There was no one around. There was no one for me. At 23, she was tending to patients in their homes. She cared for two sisters who died within a day of each other, and a little girl about 10 years old who died on the way to the hospital. 'It was so depressing. I didn't want that, so I went into the service,' Ms. Barre said.

"She was stationed at Camp Edwards on Cape Cod before joining the 16th General Hospital at Fort Devens. In Dec 1943, her unit was sent to Liverpool, ENG. She was one of 100 nurses who shipped out along with 500 corpsmen and support staff, 60 male officers and a few Red Cross volunteers. On 18 Jun 1945, they were sent to setup a hospital unit in tents in a field in Normandy for six weeks, near the front lines of the Battle of the Bulge. The hospital was hit by bombs several times… People say, 'What did you think when you were getting bombed?' but we were busy. Everybody got up at the same time, lined up across the street, got breakfast, washed and got in the trucks to go to the hospital site."

"Each ward held 30 patients, 15 on each side of the big tents warmed by potbelly stoves, and she and the other nurses would do their best to care for the wounded. She was on the surgical orthopedic ward and those wounded in the Bulge were usually found in the woods bloodied and frostbitten, with their clothes frozen to them. They were brought to the ward wrapped in blankets and the nurses would strip their clothes off them, wash them, wrap them in dressings and evaluate them. They were brought in on stretchers and they laid them down on the floor. The doctors decided if they needed medical care, surgery or emergency surgery. We were brought pans of hot water. The first thing we did was wash them up and get pajamas on them and pin an envelope containing their information to their pajamas.

"Even at 11 at night, if the wounded were hungry, kitchen staff would bring over big meals for them, and then the nurses would medicate them. We didn't have to have doctors' orders. We carried codeine, aspirin and Nembutal if they needed it for sleeping. If the pain was worse, we could give them morphine. Many times, the wounded were picked up in trucks and sent to Paris or ENG. I reinforced dressings. The doctor would come through and say, 'Penicillin,' and penicillin teams would go around with sulfur tablets and powder used for wounds. If it was very serious, they would go to the ICU. Those near death with lung problems, amputations and stomach wounds were put in intensive care."

Dorothy (Taft) Barre reminiscences continued from p 5

"Ms. Barre took care of the wounded seven days a week for at least 12 hours each day, starting at 7 a.m. and going until 10 p.m. at times.

"The Battle of the Bulge is considered one of the largest and bloodiest battles of World War II. There were 89,000 casualties reported, including more than 19,000 killed. The Bulge ended in January, but the hospital would remain open for a month after victory in Europe was celebrated on May 8,1945.

"She and others were sent to Chalons-sur-Marne to run a hospital there until November 1945, she said. She was working in a ward in Belgium on Aug. 14,1945, the day the war ended, she said. The patients were given a shot of whiskey to celebrate, she said. "That was like 30 cc's," Ms. Barre said, laughing.

"She was back home that same year, serving at Cushing Army Hospital in Framingham for a year before leaving the service, and again working as a private duty nurse. She also worked at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Newington, CT, for several years, but returned to Oxford to take care of her ailing mother.

"In 1952, Dorothy May (Taft) Nelson gave birth to a son, but put him up for adoption, she said, because she was alone and taking care of her mother. Nearly 50 years later, she would meet Nelson Dunham, now 66, of Yardley, PA who was looking for his birth mother. Ms. Barre and her son's adoptive mother would become close friends. She is also close to her biological granddaughter, Shara, she said. Ms. Barre visits them both at Mr. Dunham's cottage on the Cape. While working at Hahnemann Hospital in Worcester , MA from 1955 to 1983 when she retired, Ms. Barre married Clarence Barre of Webster, who served as a paratrooper with the 101st Airborne Division during World War II. Mr. Barre died in 1999. The couple had been married 38 years."

Linda Newberry writes

Since her last communication in 2012 (can it really be that long???) she and Elden have had their 50th wedding anniversary party (22 Jul 2012). They were married 22 Jul 1962 in Clifton CO Methodist Church which apparently is no longer there. They are grappling with the increased medical issues that seem to be impacting many of other members these days. Their daughter Renee requires 24/7 home care and their son Michael is helping them with family needs. Her grandson Gregory is making great progress in his college courses in Omaha, NE. Linda's other son Lionel and family (four children) both work full time and are deeply involved in civic activities as well. One of their sons, Carson (aged 11) has a rare disease called Lesch Nyhan Syndrome and requires a power chair.

Linda also notes her genealogy research has reached big snags and has almost ground to a halt. The Genealogy Society she was so involved in has also succumbed to "aging out". They were able to give the West Nebraska Family Research & History Center their official records, once they paid to have them digitalized. Does that sound familiar???

This could be a great resource for anyone with Nebraska connections.

Correction to the TTT (Jun 2019) p 5 but IT COULD BE SO MUCH MORE!!!

In the "A young child and his father mourned in Oklahoma" the ancestry of Harry Wilbur Taft is missing a generation. It should read

> Harry Wilbur Taft was the son of Harry Mortimer (Charles W., George W., perhaps s/o Perry, perhaps s/o William, Paul, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

Thank you Becky for catching that.

She also noted that her husband, Larry Grothe, had his DNA done last year through ancestry.com and wondered if that would be helpful in connecting his Taft lineage.

NOTE: this could be a major break for this line of Taft family members. Perhaps there are other members of this line who have done the same thing, or would like to. And perhaps one could find a match with members who know they are descended from Benjamin Taft, (with no "perhaps" around their ancestors' names). Or perhaps we might discover that George W. is actually from one of the other brother's lines. How about it, folks?

Wish we had Neil Todd still working on the Taft DNA, he would be right on it!!!

In Memoriam

Floyd Thomas Taft

Floyd Thomas Taft was born 11 Jun 1929 in Carrying Place, Ameliasburg, Ontario, CAN, son of Asa Thomas and Lillice Coral (Bovay) Taft, and died 12 Jun 2019 in Belleville, Hasting, Ontario, CAN. He was buried in Carrying Place Cemetery, Annex, Ontario, CAN. He married (1) 16 Jul 1955 in the United Church, Peterborough, Ontario, CAN to Edith Carolyn (Graham) Wood. They had two children: Robert Bruce and Gregory Scott Taft. He married (2) in Feb 2010 Laura Ruckstuhl. He was the uncle of Clint Taft, a TFA member.

Floyd Taft passed away at Belleville General Hospital on Wednesday, 12 Jun 2019 in his 91st year. "He was the loving husband of Laura Ruckstuhl Taft and was predeceased by his wife Edith Taft. Floyd is predeceased by his sons Gregory "Scott" Taft and Robert Taft. He will be truly missed by Laura's children; Janet & Gerry Peacock, Charlie & Susan Ruckstuhl, Glenda & Wallace Rodgers. Dear grandfather to Emma & Matt Villa, Michelle Taft and step grandfather to Cheryl, Jason, Jennifer & Mark, Melissa & Ed, Zachary & Carine, Nathaniel & Beth. Great grandfather to Alexandria and step great grandfather to Brandon, Austin, Eric, Logan and Emilia, who is on her way cherished friends. Predeceased by his parents Thomas & Lillice Taft and his siblings; Roy,Howard, Clarence, David (Allan) and Florence. *(Source: FindAGrave)*. Floyd will be remembered by his special cousin Pete Taft (Rita) and special nephew Clint Taft (Shannon) and his many cherished friends. He was predeceased by his parents Thomas and Lillice Taft and his siblings: Roy, Howard, Clarence, David (Allan), and Florence. *(source: FindAGrave)*

Floyd Thomas was the son of Asa Thomas (David Umphrey, Donald, Alpheus, Daniel, Daniel, Robert) Taft.

Please do not send any dues payments

As of right now we should not be collecting any dues until we have sorted out where we are headed.

Taft Family Association Officers

President: still searching
Vice President & Genealogist: now searching
Secretary/Treasurer: Pat Allen, 95 Wyman Rd., Unit 1110, Keene, NH 03431; patmarkallen@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor: Pat Allen, 95 Wyman Rd., Unit 1110; Keene, NH 03431; patmarkallen@gmail.com
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Annual dues of $8 per family are due and payable each year on or before June.
(Your dues are paid through the year on your mailing label.)
(Please do not send any dues at this time, thank you.)

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Happy Holidays